

BERRYMAN

1

A short distance between reality and  
fantasy walking away from Maxim Gorky  
but  
if Henry had turned  
with Mr. Bones  
and gone off from Poesy's tower  
(come down) he might not have fallen  
onto the stones of Hades  
fallen so far through the great  
yawning chasm of chance --  
and instead hung to the edge  
clinging to the people.

2

Henry was of them  
but John denied it  
happy with self (alone)  
though unhappy and he drew them in  
his notes composing examinations  
in the dark.  
Henry was of the working poor  
though poet  
and he failed to see it  
failed his own exams  
time after time  
did John.

3

"Let the new crit come  
and break over us;  
we shall be rocks"  
sd Galway who saw B. at Princeton  
the dark gate of a corpse --  
he was drunk with study  
but Galway knew by instinct  
the earth road  
the hard stones  
and the plane saw  
of labor. Though he too  
saw the twist  
of language in the Dream Songs  
longing to shuck his self (B.)  
for Henry.

That was the great fall all shuttering  
 so sick he missed the river  
 smashed instead on the dock  
 old dry bones  
 must have snapped --  
 (they were the killer kids  
 all intellect)  
 if he had met the ones from 1969 first  
 he might have come down  
 from the poetry tower  
 to join hands  
 with the people.

Now it is dark Henry  
 and we cry your memory  
 a bit -- the lank old man  
 all Anglo-Irish  
 straining to capture intellect  
 in a bottle: the brain  
 a specimen  
 but it doesn't work that way  
 anymore.  
 (the people cannot wait  
 for the sound of thought  
 while hunger gnaws the earth.)

#### PORTRAIT OF HENRY

Henry had been poor for a long time -- poor and sick and ugly and old -- he had always been old and he had always been poor. The ugliness came and went: at times when his eyes flashed he was beautiful and at times when he was angry he looked well. I knew him during the days when he was just getting a break, when the lovers of literature (as he called them) were starting to mention him with interest and respect and I liked him best then. He was not a legend yet, just a man.

He lived in a small, nondescript flat in Hollywood. There were two rooms and a kitchen, one water colour painting on the living room wall and a sign a friend had made from one of those plastic print machines whose words I forget.

We always brought the beer to Henry and sometimes we supplied him with good cigars. He was usually six to